

King's Research Portal

DOI:

[10.1017/9781108277648.005](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108277648.005)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

McMullan, G. (2017). Remembering and Forgetting in 1916: Israel Gollancz, the Shakespeare Tercentenary and the National Theatre. In *Creating Shakespeare: articles from the World Shakespeare Congress, 2016 : Shakespeare Survey 70* (Vol. 70, pp. 40-49). (Shakespeare Survey; No. 70). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108277648.005>

Citing this paper

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Remembering and Forgetting in 1916:

Israel Gollancz, the Shakespeare Tercentenary and the National Theatre

Gordon McMullan

King's College London

At the rear of the foyer of the National Theatre in London is the building's foundation stone, which begins with the words 'In Memory of William Shakespeare'.¹ This might strike casual theatregoers, if they notice it at all, as curious. Surely this expression of commemoration would be more logically located half a mile east at Shakespeare's Globe or a hundred miles northwest in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford, since these are the two UK theatres that can be guaranteed to offer at least one production of a Shakespeare play at any given moment, whereas the National Theatre's repertoire is, as befits a consciously 'national' theatre, far broader in scope. In 2016, the apparent incongruity of the foundation stone's commemorative function was all the more apparent, since the National, curiously, opened no Shakespeare production during the Quatercentenary year (an *As You Like It* was in repertory early in the year, but it opened the previous autumn). Yet the history of the National Theatre was closely tied right from the start to the commemoration of Shakespeare, and there has been a production of at least one Shakespeare play at the National virtually every year since its very first season. Furthermore, its origins and those of both the Royal Shakespeare

Company and Shakespeare's Globe are arguably bound up – more than each organisation tends to acknowledge – with the prolonged and often tortuous process of commemoration that began with the build-up to the Shakespeare Tercentenary of 1916.² There are obvious enough reasons why these theatres might not wish to overemphasise their origins in the Tercentenary, not least the RSC and the Globe, neither of which especially wishes to be seen as in some way a product of the history of a competitor theatre. Nevertheless, it is a story that can valuably be told, both so as to demonstrate the extent of the interweaving of Shakespearean performance and commemoration across the twentieth century and as a case study in the selective remembering and, above all, forgettings that constitute the processes of memorialisation.

As a point of comparison with the NT's perhaps surprisingly Shakespearean foundation stone, I will turn briefly to another, more modest commemorative marker, a memorial plaque located in the Department of English at King's College London. Its wording is simple:

IN MEMORY OF
ISRAEL GOLLANCZ Kt. LittD.
FOR TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE
THIS TABLET HAS BEEN PLACED IN
THE SKEAT AND FURNIVALL LIBRARY
ITSELF AN EXAMPLE OF HIS
DEVOTION TO THE
COLLEGE

Sir Israel Gollancz – medievalist, Shakespearean, cultural entrepreneur – was Professor of English at King's from 1903 until his death in 1930.³ He had

studied under the philologist and medievalist Walter William Skeat (1835-1912) at Christ's College, Cambridge, and he later persuaded Skeat's widow to donate her husband's library to King's; he was instrumental also in King's' acquisition of the library of F. J. Furnivall, founder of the Early English Text Society. The key detail, however, is not the referencing of the means by which these collections came to the College but rather the date the plaque gives for Gollancz's birth: 1864. This is in fact incorrect – Gollancz was born in 1863 – but the mistake is telling because it serves, consciously or otherwise, to align Gollancz with Shakespeare, the Tercentenary of whose birth fell in 1864 – which was also the year that initiated the ongoing, unresolved struggle between Stratford-upon-Avon and London for 'ownership' of the Shakespeare industry in Britain. On that occasion, Stratford won resoundingly, hosting a two-week Shakespeare festival and setting in train the process that led to the building of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, which later became the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. In 1916, Gollancz sought in effect to reverse that victory and instead focus commemorative activity on London – not simply for its own sake but as a springboard for a vision of Shakespeare that would, he hoped, transcend both the local and the national and acquire a global identity.

That Gollancz should be linked with Shakespeare by way of the plaque at King's is not so surprising both because Gollancz was a consistent presence in the planning for the 1916 Tercentenary commemorations and because it appears to be the fate of Shakespeare's commemorators to blur themselves, or

to be blurred by others, with the writer in whose memory they are ostensibly operating. Without the assiduous work of Gollancz on behalf of the various memorial committees of which he was 'Hon. Sec.' in the build-up to the 1916 Tercentenary, the histories of the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company and even Shakespeare's Globe would surely have been very different. In and of itself, a counterfactual claim of this kind may or may not have value, of course, so in this essay I will offer a brief history of Gollancz's involvement in the 1916 Tercentenary in order to do two things: to reflect on the blend of remembering and forgetting that seems to constitute commemoration and to consider the intersection of the Shakespeare Tercentenary and the First World War. Gollancz's leading role in the Tercentenary – as opposed, say, to his role as a founder of the British Academy – was quite rapidly forgotten in the period between the wars, and this attack of amnesia in respect of an individual seems to me to be synecdochic of the larger forgetting of the impact of the Tercentenary on the creation of certain contemporary UK cultural institutions.

To reassemble this history, it is necessary to go back to the time immediately before Gollancz was appointed to his chair at King's. In his preface to the *Book of Homage*, the sumptuous commemorative volume he edited in 1916, he noted the history of planning that had gone into the Tercentenary. 'For years past', he wrote, '– as far back as 1904 – many of us had been looking forward to the Shakespeare Tercentenary as the occasion for some fitting memorial to symbolize the intellectual fraternity of mankind in

the universal homage accorded to the genius of the greatest Englishman'.⁴ Those plans had, however, been curtailed by the war – 'the dream of the world's brotherhood to be demonstrated by its common and united commemoration of Shakespeare, with many another fond illusion, was rudely shattered' (*Homage*, vii), Gollancz notes, sadly – and they had, in any case, already been subject to a good deal of struggle and underachievement before war broke out. The original plan, prompted by a letter to *The Times* in 1903 from a brewer called Richard Badger, had been to erect a statue of Shakespeare in London, but there had been fierce resistance to this mode of commemoration from supporters of the long-established plan to build a state-subsidised National Theatre, led by theatre practitioner Harley Granville Barker and journalist William Archer, whose *Scheme & Estimates for a National Theatre* provided a financial blueprint for the projected building and theatre company.⁵ In 1908 the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre (SMNT) committee was formed from a merger of the Shakespeare Memorial Committee, of which Gollancz had been honorary secretary, and the National Theatre committee – with the ubiquitous Gollancz once more as Honorary Secretary – and the focus was now on the building of a Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre to be opened in time for the 1916 Tercentenary.

Two major fundraising events took place – the Shakespeare Memorial Ball of 1911 and the 'Shakespeare's England' exhibition of 1912 – which promised well but did not, in the end, provide much in the way of funds for the project. The second of these – the 'Shakespeare's England' exhibition at

Earl's Court – featured a series of architectural reconstructions designed to give the public the chance to 'walk straight into the sixteenth century and visualise the environment and atmosphere' of the period.⁶ The most popular of these buildings was a working replica of the Globe theatre offering excerpts from plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The design derived from a William Poel drawing from 1897, though Poel – longstanding champion of the reconstruction of Elizabethan performance spaces and practices – considered the Earl's Court Globe a travesty of his proposals. Thus even before the onset of the First World War the project was dogged by an ongoing financial shortfall, and it became all too apparent that the imagined theatre would not be built in time for the Tercentenary, an unavoidable fact that Gollancz lamented:

We had hoped that, on a site that has already been acquired, a stately building, to be associated with that august name, equipped and adequately endowed for the furtherance of Shakespearian drama and dramatic art generally, would have made the year 1916 memorable in the annals of the English stage (*Homage*, vii).

The committee had not, however, given up hope: in 1914 they had spent £50,000 – over half of the funds they had acquired – on a plot of land in Bloomsbury on which they hoped eventually to build the theatre.

The Tercentenary was, because of the war, marked in relatively subdued fashion. It had been agreed long before war broke out that the Shakespeare commemoration would be postponed until the May Day weekend, with the earnest explanation that the change of calendar from Julian to Gregorian in the late sixteenth century meant that 1 May 1916 was in fact

four hundred years to the day from 23 April 1616: this decision facilitated the avoidance of any uncomfortable conflation of Shakespeare and Christ and underlines, even as it seeks to elide, the quasi-religious place of Shakespeare in British culture at this time.⁷ The Tercentenary was marked officially over four days in early May, beginning with a political commemoration at the Mansion House which included the reading out of messages from the King and Queen and from US President Woodrow Wilson and speeches by the Lord Mayor, the US ambassador and the High Commissioners of Australia and South Africa.⁸ The message from the King and Queen with which the event opened acknowledged receipt of their copy of an imposing collection of essays, poems and other contributions called *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare*, edited by Israel Gollancz, which *The Times* described as a 'sumptuous volume' which 'may be said to record, in a peculiarly catholic way, what after 300 years the best literary representatives of British and allied culture are saying about Shakespeare'.⁹ Certainly the *Book of Homage* – a large, elegantly produced book with a consciously global reach – not only underlines the hegemonic status of Shakespeare in the early twentieth century as an icon of Englishness and Empire but also, as the journalist's phrase 'in a peculiarly catholic way' suggests, serves as a precursor of the future role of Shakespeare as a figure of a global culture not restricted to Empire.

The *Book of Homage* has an astonishingly ambitious sweep, with a hundred and sixty-six contributions in verse and prose in languages from Sanskrit to Setswana celebrating a broad range of versions of, and meanings

for, 'Shakespeare' – though with the omission, for obvious enough reasons, of representation from Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Contributors range from novelists John Galsworthy and Edmund Gosse to poets Wilfred Campbell and René de Clercq, from Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore to the Nobel-Prize-winning human biologist Sir Ronald Ross. Each offers a perspective appropriate to their context – 'Dante e Shakespeare' by Italian senator Isidoro del Lungo, say, or 'An Eddic Homage to William Shakespeare' by Icelandic scholar Jón Stefánsson – and most either praise Shakespeare's genius or choose a particular element in Shakespeare's *oeuvre* on which to focus their brief contribution. Many of the contributions are distinctly conservative, expressive of Edwardian patriotism and the colonial mindset – very visibly so in a contribution such as the New Zealander William Pember Reeves' poem 'The Dream Imperial'. Yet there are also contributions that – as Coppélia Kahn and others have demonstrated – complicate our understanding of the work the *Book* was doing, most notably, as David Schalkwyk and others have pointed out, 'A South African's Homage', the only anonymous item in the volume, written in Setswana by Solomon Plaatje, an early ANC activist whom Gollancz met when he was part of a pre-war political delegation to London, and that of future president of the Irish Republic Douglas Hyde, a poem in Gaelic that even in the censored translation which appeared in the printed volume, had potential, as Andrew Murphy has shown, to upset patriotic readers of the *Book of Homage* at the moment of Easter 1916.¹⁰

The *Book of Homage* is thus unexpectedly inclusive and far-reaching. It performs a cultural moment with brio, enabling the reader to find within its pages the Shakespeare with which he or she is most comfortable. Enthusiasts for nation and empire could read it untroubled, by and large – though they might have baulked a little not only at Plaatje's and Hyde's contributions but also at C. H. Herford's unexpectedly generous and, in context, brave essay, 'The German Contribution to Shakespeare Criticism' – yet the incipient globalist could also find within its pages expressions of hope in a changing world. Its apparent arbitrariness turns out often to be quite precise grouping and, at times, humorous juxtaposition. As an expression of the condition of Shakespeare studies in its moment, the *Book of Homage* is unparalleled, but it is far more than that. It makes very apparent how pivotal was the year 1916 in the negotiation between the fading Shakespeare of empire and the emerging global Shakespeare, and it invites the reader to absorb a range of perspectives, by no means all compatible, upon the National Poet. It is, in other words, a *performative* memorial, and it underlines both the complexity and the globalism of Gollancz's outlook.

The second of Gollancz's two main contributions to the Tercentenary – clearly the less likely of the two – is the Shakespeare Hut, which also had a tangible global dimension. As I have noted, in 1914, the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre committee, recognising the need for action, acquired, at substantial cost, a plot of land at the corner of Keppel and Gower Streets, where the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine now

stands, just across from Senate House. Almost immediately, however, war broke out, and the committee had to decide what should be done with the empty site in wartime. Attempts to raise money for the building of a theatre with a war on would be considered insensitive, to say the least, and it was Gollancz who proposed a solution – that he broker an arrangement with the YMCA for the creation of temporary accommodation for overseas troops on the site of the theatre, a series of interconnected buildings to be known as the ‘Shakespeare Hut’.

The word ‘hut’, the standard term at the time for the YMCA’s temporary buildings both on the war and home fronts, does not adequately evoke a sense of the building that was erected on the site. Temporary it may have been, but the Shakespeare Hut included substantial accommodation (scores of thousands of beds were let to Anzac troops between 1916 and the war’s end), recreation space, dining facilities, a shop and a concert hall in which Shakespearean performances took place – strictly for the resident soldiers – featuring some of the finest actors of the day, among them Ellen Terry and Johnston Forbes-Robertson, whose American wife Gertrude Elliott combined management of the Hut’s theatrical programme with women’s suffrage activism.¹¹ It was hardly the stage the SMNT committee had expected or intended to create, but its existence means nevertheless that Shakespearean performances of a certain kind took place between 1916 and 1919 in a commemorative space on the chosen memorial site – a fact that until recently has simply been forgotten.¹²

The Hut, as Ailsa Grant Ferguson has shown, is a curious, multi-faceted space, with resonances that both outweigh and are, in a certain sense, the direct result of its status as a temporary building, a space created in large part with the premise of keeping young soldiers away from the temptations – sex and alcohol, principally – of the wartime cityscape (the same premise applied to the Aldwych Hut for Australian soldiers and the later Eagle Hut, also at Aldwych, for Americans). That the Hut housed Anzac soldiers (mostly, but not entirely, New Zealanders) was, in the SMNT's terms, incidental. What seems to have mattered more to Gollancz than the identity or nationality of the soldiers occupying the Hut – though their overseas origins unquestionably chimed with his global vision for Shakespeare – was the intention that the space should house Shakespearean performance and related educational activities, as YMCA secretary Basil Yeaxlee makes clear when he observes to Gollancz in a letter that the Hut will enable 'the purpose of the Shakespeare memorial [to be] fulfilled as far as possible during war time by the arrangement of lectures and rendering of plays'.¹³ In the same letter Yeaxlee also notes that the nature of the Hut meant that it could be assembled block by block and thus 'the Concert and Lecture Hall could be put up first', thereby implying his recognition that for his interlocutor the educational and theatrical possibilities of the Hut were paramount. It is the nature of the Hut as a temporary space for soldiers that facilitated the performance on its tiny, restless stage of scenes from Shakespeare by some of the most prominent actors of the day, who would not normally, it can be

assumed, have chosen to act in such constricted conditions. This appears to have been the value to Gollancz of the Hut stage – that it enabled the performance of a virtual Memorial Theatre, one that in time provoked a layering of memorial functions as the originary logic of the site – a theatre in memory of Shakespeare – meshed with the accumulating logic of commemoration produced by the Hut’s primary function as military accommodation for wartime and thus the deaths, inevitably, of a proportion of those who passed through its doors. Ailsa Grant Ferguson notes that the original funding for the Hut’s lounge had come from the mother of a fallen soldier, Lieutenant Leslie Tweedie, who had been killed in 1915, making immediate from the outset the multiply commemorative function of the building and even leading in due course to a counternarrative of the Hut’s creation, as the dead soldier’s mother later claimed to have created the entire Hut in memory of her son.¹⁴ Such reallocation of memorial function serves as a version of forgetting – forgetting, that is, the impersonal logic of the Hut’s memorial status in the natural death of a playwright three hundred years earlier and replacing it with a personal and more immediate commemoration of wartime death by violence.

Theatre history – particularly the internal mythology of a given theatre or company – is constituted by such patchworks of remembering and forgetting, as the presentation of institutional history is adapted to suit subsequent formations and missions are adjusted to map more effectively onto funding regimes. The tension present in the National Theatre project

from the beginning – its function, as outlined by Barker and Archer, both to sustain Shakespearean performance and to champion new playwriting – necessarily finds its counterpart in histories of the organisation. Daniel Rosenthal's recent history of the National Theatre differs markedly from earlier accounts in this regard, understandably foregrounding Barker and Archer's status as 'founding fathers' but offering generous recognition of the place of the SMNT in the National Theatre's origins.¹⁵ This has not always been the case, as Geoffrey Whitworth's attitude to Gollancz in his earlier history of the NT suggests:

[B]ehind [the] kaleidoscopic maze of committees, flitting to and fro, one glimpses the mercurial figure of Israel Gollancz, [. . .] benign, discreet, master of innocent intrigue, [. . .] with every thread in his hands, and alone capable of unravelling the tangled skein when the right moment came.¹⁶

Perhaps this gentle caricaturing of Gollancz is simply a function of time passing. As founder, immediately after the war, of the British Drama League, which sought to reinvigorate the National Theatre project in the face of what it saw as the SMNT's sluggishness, Whitworth arguably had an interest in downplaying what Gollancz and the SMNT had achieved, though his final description of Gollancz is affectionate, noting his importance to the Shakespeare National Theatre idea, 'with which he had been associated from the very beginning, loyal to it through every chance of fortune, and though criticized by some, the axle round which the whole wheel turned' (Whitworth, 179). Others have subsequently tended to be dismissive towards the SMNT committee and towards Gollancz in particular.¹⁷ Sally Beauman, in

her history of the RSC, describes Gollancz as 'haughty' and misreads the materials in the NT Archive to the extent of suggesting that the plan and elevation of the Shakespeare Hut that forms part of the collection is of the proposed theatre itself, which she describes sarcastically as 'a long, low structure, resembling a conglomeration of Stratford tea-shops' – as if everyone involved in Shakespearean theatre would eventually defer to Stratford for their design aesthetic – adding that during the war the SMNT did 'nothing [. . .] except to lease the Bloomsbury site to the YMCA, who built on it a small wooden hut in which to entertain British troops' – an assessment which, as I have shown, is misleading.¹⁸

I have written elsewhere about the reasons for the resistance to Gollancz, which date right back to the build-up to 1916 and are not always edifying – in brief, the anti-semitism that pervaded the British establishment in the period – and I will not repeat these arguments here.¹⁹ There may also be an element of the perennial reluctance of theatre practitioners to acknowledge the relevance of academic intervention in their professional zone, particularly when the academic in question adopts the role of cultural entrepreneur, as Gollancz did. Whatever the reason, one effect of the downplaying of the achievements of Gollancz and, along with him, the SMNT is to suppress the significance of the impact of the Tercentenary on the shape of British Shakespearean theatre today. It is entirely right and proper that the National Theatre sees Barker and Archer as founding fathers in a way Gollancz is not, and there is no question that the establishment of the National Theatre was

the result above all of the sheer doggedness shown by theatre practitioners. Yet without the work of the SMNT, and without Gollancz's commemorative persistence in the shape particularly of the Shakespeare Hut – a creation that helped sustain the SMNT's existence throughout the war and, most importantly, enabled the first performances of Shakespeare on what might be called a memorial stage – it is arguable that the National Theatre project might well have faded away entirely.

It is clear, then, that key elements of the origins of the National Theatre lie in the 1916 Tercentenary. What is less well known – though it may account in part for the dismissiveness of Beauman – is that the Royal Shakespeare Company too owes an element of its history to the Tercentenary and specifically to Gollancz's entrepreneurship, though the timeline on the RSC's website simply skips the period from 1913 to 1925. In the course of 1918, the young director William Bridges-Adams had a series of conversations with William Archer in which he argued that the best way to proceed with the aim of creating a National Theatre was to found a company *first* and build a theatre *later* – an argument that would haunt the NT for decades. At this point, the pre-histories of the NT and the RSC briefly overlap. In 1919, Bridges-Adams took over from Frank Benson as director of the Stratford-upon-Avon Festival, and Archibald Flower, chairman of the Festival, encouraged the SMNT to support the launching of a new company that – by contrast with Benson, who had done a great deal of cutting – would perform Shakespeare's plays largely uncut (Bridges-Adams acquired the nickname

‘Un-a-Bridges-Adams’) and would, though based for part of the year in Stratford, have a commitment both to playing in London and to touring. The SMNT chose to support this project, and a joint committee was created between the governors of the Stratford Memorial Theatre and members of the SMNT committee, including Archer, Lyttelton and Gollancz – a rare instance of Shakespearean collaboration between London and Stratford.

The New Shakespeare Company did not directly *become* the Royal Shakespeare Company – it was in fact viewed by influential members of the SMNT, not least George Bernard Shaw, as potentially the basis for a National Theatre company – but it embodied what was to become the RSC blueprint: a Shakespeare-centred repertory company with a base in Stratford, a London programme and a commitment to national touring. And it was funded by SMNT money – or, more precisely, by the income the SMNT committee was currently receiving from the Shakespeare Hut. Between 1919 and its demolition in 1923, the Hut became the temporary home of the Indian YMCA, an arrangement which provided £3000 a year in rent. It was this exact sum that the SMNT committee used to fund the New Shakespeare Company between 1919 and 1923, only reducing the amount once the Indian YMCA rent was no longer available (that is, for the 1923 season). Thus, briefly, the Shakespeare Hut, the product of Gollancz’s entrepreneurship, underpinned an early phase of the history of the RSC, sustaining Shakespeare performance at Stratford during a difficult period.

It can further be argued that, in a certain way, the third and most recent of Britain's primary Shakespeare-producing theatre companies, Shakespeare's Globe, had its seeds in the 1916 Tercentenary. The official history of the reconstructed Globe naturally offers a rather different story of origins, one that lies firmly in the extraordinary inspiration and persistence of Sam Wanamaker – and rightly so, for many reasons. Without Wanamaker's indefatigable energy and extraordinary persuasive powers, the project would never have got off the ground. As Paul Prescott notes, 'few theatrical spaces in the world owe so much to the vision, vitality and perseverance of one person'.²⁰ Yet, in celebrating Wanamaker's remarkable achievement, the Globe tends understandably to downplay Wanamaker's predecessors in the longstanding project to create a reconstructed Elizabethan theatre in London, above all William Poel, lifelong evangelist for the recreation of early modern conditions of performance, whose 1897 plans for a small-scale replica of the Globe were, to his distaste, the basis for the 'Elizabethan theatre' that had formed the centrepiece of the 'Shakespeare's England' exhibition of 1912, which, as we have seen, was created as a fundraising event for the SMNT.²¹ Poel's vision – one that, as it happens, overlapped in key ways with that of Gollancz, though by and large they clashed more than they agreed – was not solely theatrical: it was to create a Shakespeare Memorial that would combine an 'Elizabethan theatre' with 'a Shakespearian Library and Museum' – in other words, an establishment that would be in roughly equal measure theatrical and educational.²²

The extent to which Wanamaker's project has a direct link with that of Poel depends on which myth of origin you choose. Prescott reports that in a file Wanamaker sent to the Gotlieb Archive at Boston University towards the end of his life he included a programme from the Cleveland Great Lakes Festival of 1936 to which he 'attached a Post-it note with the handwritten exclamation "The Beginning!"', and he notes that Wanamaker had spent the summer of that year playing bit parts on a replica Elizabethan stage at the Festival (Prescott, 151). 'But', Prescott adds, "'The Beginning" was a movable moment and would depend on which version of the genesis story Wanamaker happened to be telling', one of which was that 'the idea of rebuilding the Globe first occur[red] to the fifteen-year-old working-class Chicago boy [when he was] taken by his father to [. . . the] World's Fair in 1934, where [. . .] he was struck by the beauty of a reconstructed Globe, one of a dozen or so ersatz landmarks comprising the English Village' (152). If this sounds very much like the 1912 'Shakespeare's England' exhibition and its replica Globe, that is because the design of the 1934 theatre was in fact based on that of 1912, thus creating a direct causal link between Wanamaker's project, one of the SMNT committee's fundraising events and Poel's original Globe design of 1897.

The point is that it does not especially matter which of these stories, if any, is the correct one. Each underlines the fact that Wanamaker's Globe is the fulfilment of the project that Poel and others had championed since the end of the nineteenth century to build a theatre that would allow Shakespeare

performance, to use Poel's own words, 'upon a stage surrounded on three sides by the audience, the only kind of stage where the actor moves and speaks in the Shakespearian focus[, and] only under its conditions [can] the correct interpretation [be] given to his work on the stage'.²³ Prescott is right to note that 'there is a world – or perhaps an ocean – of difference between Poel's antiquarianism and Wanamaker's idea that Shakespeare might serve as the locus and alibi for a joyous civic and communal experience' (161), but he is right too when he acknowledges the 'ancestral link between' Poel and Wanamaker, 'between the neo-Elizabethan movement of the late nineteenth century and the logical, if delayed, fruition of that movement a century later: the opening of the third Globe Theatre' (160). Shakespeare's Globe has, in the two decades of its existence, become the *de facto* 'Memorial Theatre' in London, frequently mistaken by tourists for an actual site of Shakespearean memory: Shakespeare's 'own', 'original' Globe refurbished. The challenges over the claims to 'authenticity' that have been made on behalf of the Globe (though rarely by actual Globe employees) are well-documented and need not be repeated here, but the point is to acknowledge that the history of the SMNT suggests a mild elision in the Globe's prevailing origin story.²⁴ In a certain way, this is an instance of the return of the repressed: after all, the new Globe, with its extraordinarily active and engaged Education programme, most fully expresses – more so than the educational programmes of its competitors – the dual vision of theatre and education that Poel had

consistently championed and that Gollancz sought to develop in the unlikelyst of ways through the creation of the Shakespeare Hut.²⁵

The reconstructed Globe is not a direct product of the Tercentenary – less so even than is the RSC. Yet its story nonetheless intersects intriguingly with that of Gollancz and the SMNT, and its current status as London’s primary producer of Shakespeare means that it, more than the RSC and the National Theatre, occupies for the moment the role of London’s Shakespeare memorial theatre. This has come about for contingent reasons: in hindsight, the RSC’s departure in 2001 from its longstanding base at the Barbican ceded key territory just as the Globe was beginning to establish a bridgehead on the Bankside, whilst the artistic directorship of the National Theatre does not at present appear to view Shakespearean preservation or innovation as a priority. This state of play – the predominance of a reconstructed early modern playhouse in the postmodern theatrical scene – would presumably please Poel, but it would surely baffle the majority of members of the SMNT committee, who would never have foreseen such an outcome. That said, Gollancz himself would in all likelihood cast a benign eye over it all: experience surely taught him that it is the vision, far more than the detail, that matters in the end, and the single most obvious conclusion from the history of the SMNT is that stasis is never achieved.

You build a statue, you build a memorial theatre, you think that by definition commemoration will continue on those sites indefinitely, but it does not: it disappears and then reappears elsewhere in unpredicted locales.

The forgetting – perhaps ‘suppression’ is not too strong a word – of the achievements of Israel Gollancz is synecdochic of the deletion of the memory of the Tercentenary as a key impetus in the creation of London’s major theatres for the production of Shakespeare – by which I mean both theatrical and cultural production. Commemoration is a looking back, a remembering, but it also, as we have seen, involves a good deal of forgetting. Cultural organisations tend to look back only selectively as the current incumbents seek to avoid being tied to earlier visions of the institution’s mission; new myths of origin are established as interest groups compete for foundational recognition. In the case of Shakespeare, the memorial and the national are closely bound, and Gollancz’s insistent belief in the inter- or supra-national significance of Shakespeare does not fit comfortably with the overarching narrative of a *national* Shakespeare theatre to which the Tercentenary became subsumed. The awkward negotiation between Shakespeare the English national poet and what we now call ‘global Shakespeare’ arguably began with Gollancz’s contribution to the Tercentenary, above all the *Book of Homage* with its extraordinary global reach at the time of a world war, but the tensions of Shakespearean commemoration and the ongoing struggle for ‘ownership’ of Shakespeare have led to a sustained distortion of his role in the establishment of the primary players in the Shakespeare industry in Britain today and it has cost him his place in public memory.

¹ This essay is an abbreviated version of my chapter in Gordon McMullan and Philip Mead, with Kate Flaherty, Ailsa Grant Ferguson and Mark Houlahan, *Antipodal Shakespeare: Remembering and Forgetting in Britain, Australia and New Zealand*,

1916-2016 (London: Arden Bloomsbury, forthcoming). I am grateful to Philip Mead and to Margaret Bartley, publisher of the Arden Shakespeare series, for agreeing to let me use the material in this essay. I'm grateful too to Peter Holland for requesting it for *Survey*.

² One index of the long-drawn-out nature of the process is that the foundation stone was laid by the Queen Mother in 1951 on a site near the Royal Festival Hall, yet work on Denys Lasdun's National Theatre – on a site east, not west, of Waterloo Bridge – did not begin until 1969 and the theatre was finally opened in 1976.

³ On Gollancz as cultural entrepreneur, see Gordon McMullan, 'Goblin's market: commemoration, anti-semitism and the invention of "global Shakespeare" in 1916', in Clara Calvo and Coppélia Kahn (eds), *Celebrating Shakespeare: Commemoration and Cultural Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 182-201.

⁴ Israel Gollancz (ed.), *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1916), vii.

⁵ Richard Badger, letter, *The Times* 28 May 1903; William Archer and H. Granville Barker, *A National Theatre: Scheme & Estimates* (London: Duckworth, 1907).

⁶ *The Graphic*, 11 May 1912, 674-5. See Marion F. O'Connor, 'Theatre of the Empire: "Shakespeare's England" at Earl's Court, 1912', in Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (eds), *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 68-98 (79).

⁷ On this, and for a comparative analysis of Shakespearean commemoration in Britain and Germany, see Balz Engler, 'Shakespeare and the Trenches', *Shakespeare Survey* 44 (1992), 105-112. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, reporting from London, is a little coy about 23 April being Easter that year, noting simply that '[t]he Shakespeare Tercentenary committee has fixed May 3 as Shakespeare Day, as April 23 falls on a Sunday' (1 March 1916).

⁸ See Richard Foulkes, 'The theatre of war: the 1916 tercentenary', chapter 8 of *Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 180-204 (199).

⁹ *The Times*, 2 May 1916.

¹⁰ For more on these fascinating contributions to the *Book of Homage*, see Coppélia Kahn, 'Remembering Shakespeare Imperially: The 1916 Tercetenary', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52 (2001), 456-78; David Schalkwyk and Lerothodi Lapula, 'Sol Plaatje, William Shakespeare and the Translation of Culture', *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies* 9 (2000), 10-26; Deborah Seddon, 'Shakespeare's Orality: Solomon Plaatje's Setswana Translations', *English Studies in Africa* 2 (2004), 77-95; Natasha Distiller, *South Africa, Shakespeare and Post-Colonial Culture* (Lewiston: Edward Mellen Press, 2005); Andrew Murphy, "'Bhíos ag Stratford ar an abhainn": Shakespeare, Douglas Hyde, 1916', in Janet Clare and Stephen O'Neill (eds), *Shakespeare and the Irish Writer* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2010), 51-63. For further detail, see Gordon McMullan, 'Introduction' to reissue of Israel Gollancz (ed.), *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare, 1916* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), v-xxxi.

¹¹ See Ailsa Grant Ferguson, 'Lady Forbes-Robertson's War Work: Gertrude Elliott and the Shakespeare Hut Performances, 1916-1919', in Gordon McMullan, Lena Cowen Orlin and Virginia Mason Vaughan (eds), *Woman Making Shakespeare: Text, Reception, Performance* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014), 233-242.

¹² See Ailsa Grant Ferguson, "'When Wasteful War Shall Statues Overturn": Forgetting the Shakespeare Hut', *Shakespeare* 10 (2014), 276-292.

-
- ¹³ Letter from Basil Yeaxlee to Israel Gollancz, National Theatre Archive SMNT2/1/12.
- ¹⁴ See Ailsa Grant Ferguson, 'The Shakespeare Hut for Anzacs: Building commemoration, performing memory, 1916-19', chapter three of McMullan, Mead, *et al.*, *Antipodal Shakespeare* (forthcoming).
- ¹⁵ Daniel Rosenthal, *The National Theatre Story* (London: Oberon, 2013).
- ¹⁶ Geoffrey Whitworth, *The Making of a National Theatre* (London: Faber, 1951), 44.
- ¹⁷ See, for instance, Jonathan Bate, 'Shakespeare Nationalised, Shakespeare Privatised', *English* 42 (1993), 1-18.
- ¹⁸ Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 96, 69. This misreading of the plans is repeated by Whitebrook in his biography of William Archer (348).
- ¹⁹ See McMullan, 'Goblin's market', 192ff.
- ²⁰ Paul Prescott, 'Sam Wanamaker', chapter four of Poel, *Granville Barker, Guthrie, Wanamaker: Great Shakespeareans*, Volume XV (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 151.
- ²¹ One connection between Poel and Gollancz is patronage. Poel built a model Globe on the basis of his 1897 plans which was displayed at the inaugural meeting of the London Shakespeare League in 1902: it was funded by Frida Mond, long-term friend of Gollancz and funder of several of his projects and also, later, of the annual Gollancz Memorial lecture at the British Academy.
- ²² See Marion O'Connor, 'William Poel', chapter one of Poel, *Granville Barker, Guthrie, Wanamaker*, 37. O'Connor cites documents in the Poel Collection in the Theatre department of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
- ²³ S. R. Littlewood, *The London Shakespeare Commemoration League: Its Purposes and its Story* (London: London Shakespeare League, 1928), 5.
- ²⁴ See, for instance, the discussions in the various chapters in Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (eds), *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), including Franklin J. Hildy's discussion of Poel in his chapter, 'The "essence of Globeness": authenticity, and the search for Shakespeare's stagecraft', 13-25.
- ²⁵ Poel's evangelism eventually led to a split with Gollancz, with whom he had for a time established a working partnership in the London Shakespeare League. Poel 'challenged Professor Israel Gollancz's assertion that it was not the business of the League to attack the public theatres for their misrepresentations of Shakespeare's plays on the London stage. The matter was brought to the vote, and Sir Israel Gollancz's party was defeated. He and his supporters all resigned, and [...] formed the English Shakespeare Association, which holds its meetings at King's College' [see O'Connor, 40, citing a letter of Poel's in the *London Shakespeare League Journal* 10 (Feb 1925), 73]. There is a certain irony in the fact that the setless stage in the Shakespeare Hut had offered a context for the presentation of Shakespeare's plays 'independent of scenic effects' *à la* Poel, though of course it was a far cry from the thrust-stage theatre Poel had in mind.